CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for allowing a user of a wireless communications device to participate in an

instant messaging service, wherein the wireless communications device is connectable to

5   a wireless communication network adapted to handle messages in short message service

format, and wherein the wireless communication network includes a proxy server, the

method comprising:

receiving an indication that the wireless communications device is placed in an

active state;

10   establishing a data connection between the wireless communications device and

the wireless communications network;

transmitting from the proxy server to the instant messaging service presence

information indicating that the user is online;

terminating said data connection; and

15   maintaining said presence information for the user while the wireless

communications device remains in said active state.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising

receiving at the proxy server an instant message from a sender, said instant

20   message addressed to the user; and

intercepting said instant message.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising notifying the user that said instant message has been received.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said notifying comprises

converting at least a portion of said instant message to short message service format; and

sending said converted message to the user.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said converted message includes no more than 205 characters.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising converting an identifier of the sender of said instant message to short message service format and sending said identifier to the user in conjunction with said converted message.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein said notifying comprises transmitting a message to the user in short message service format that an instant message has been received.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said message transmitted to the user includes an identifier associated with the sender of the instant message.

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9. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

storing said instant message;

establishing a data connection between the wireless communications device and

the wireless communications network; and

5   transmitting said stored instant message to the wireless communications device

over said data connection.

10. The method of claim 3, further comprising receiving at the proxy server a response to

said instant message.

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11. The method of claim 10, wherein said receiving comprises:

establishing a data connection between the wireless communications device and

the wireless communications network;

receiving at the proxy server a message transmitted in instant message format via

15   said data connection; and

transmitting the message in instant message format.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said receiving comprises:

receiving at the proxy server a message transmitted in short message service

20   format;

converting the message to instant message format; and

transmitting the message in instant message format.

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13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    receiving an indication that the wireless communications device is no longer in an

active state; and

5   transmitting from the proxy server to the instant messaging service presence

information indicating that the user is offline.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving an indication that the wireless

communications device is no longer in an active state comprises:

10   transmitting at least one message in short message service format to the wireless

communications device; and

determining that at least one said message in short message service format is

undeliverable.

15   15. A method for allowing a user of a wireless communications device to participate in an

instant messaging service, wherein the wireless communications device is connectable to

a wireless communication network adapted to handle messages in short message service

format, and wherein the wireless communication network includes a proxy server, the

method comprising:

20   receiving an indication that the wireless communications device is placed in an

active state;

establishing a data connection between the wireless communications device and

the wireless communications network;

transmitting from the proxy server to the instant messaging service presence

information indicating that the user is online;

5 terminating said data connection;

maintaining said presence information for the user while the wireless

communications device remains in said active state;

receiving at the proxy server an instant message from a sender, said instant

message addressed to the user;

10 intercepting said instant message;

notifying the user that said instant message has been received;

receiving an indication that the wireless communications device is no longer in an

active state; and

transmitting from the proxy server to the instant messaging service presence

15 information indicating that the user is offline.

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